



The New River Improvement Project



A Project of the California Mexico Border Relations Council and the City of Calexico

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

California Department of Toxic Substances Control
El Centro Field Office
627 Wake Ave.
El Centro, 92243

Thursday, May 18, 2011
2:00 PM

DRAFT Meeting Notes

- Welcome and Introductions.** New River Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair Ricardo Martinez (California Environmental Protection Agency), called the meeting to order. In attendance were the following committee members /designees/alternates: Co-Chair Jose Angel (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board), Logan Raub (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board), Luis Estrada (City of Calexico), Linsey Dale (Imperial County Farm Bureau), Miguel Figueroa (Calexico New River Committee), Antonio Ortega (Office of Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez), Steve Charlton (Imperial Irrigation District), Roger Vintze (Department of Toxic Substances Control, Imperial County CUPA), Frank Gonzalez (Cal Trans), Bart Chirstensen (State Water Resources Control Board), Carlos Angulo (California Environmental Protection Agency), Ema Rosa Silva (Vecinos de Calexico), Jeff Loux (UC Davis), Gene Crumley (UC Davis), Krista Sloniowski (UC Davis). Participating by phone: Rebecca Little Owl (International Water and Boundary Commission), Russell Bartlett (California Department of Public Health), Abid Khalaf (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board), John McCaull (Consultant), Daniel Garza (California Environmental Protection Agency), Jon Ballard (US General Services Administration), Jeong-Hee Kim (Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board), Robert Cardenas (International Boundary and Water Commission, Yuma Office), Luis Olmedo (Comite Civico), Juanita Salas (Office of Congressman Bob Filner).
- TAC Chair Update.** Chair Ricardo Martinez (California Environmental Protection Agency) welcomed all the members and reintroduced the UC Davis team, and thanked everyone again for their hard work and dedication to the project. Ricardo updated the TAC on the current uncertainty of the Cal/EPA Secretary position, but commented to the TAC that he has personally made sure Governor Brown's office has been informed of the importance and significance of the New River Improvement Project (NRIP). He is hopeful that this project will remain a high priority, regardless of who the new Secretary is. Ricardo also updated the TAC on the opening of a new waste water treatment facility near the San Ysidro border crossing and that he had the opportunity to speak to the two (2) International Water Boundary Commissioners about the NRIP and that they were extremely interested in learning more. Ricardo was hopeful that he could schedule a tour for the Commissioners so that they could visit the New River.

3. **Strategic Plan Outline Update.**

- a. **New River Interviews.** Jeff Loux (UC Davis) updated the TAC that his team had completed about eighteen (18) interviews and that they were hoping to complete several more over the next day. Their goal is to have between twenty to twenty-five interviews. Jeff thanked the TAC members for taking the time to be interviewed and also thanked them for their assistance in scheduling other interviews.
- b. **Strategic Plan Outline Overview.** Jeff Loux & Krista Sloniowski (UC Davis) went over the strategic plan outline that had been circulated to the TAC members. They expressed their opinion that the bulk of the technical documents should be put in the appendices of the document. Jeff stressed the importance of having a strategic plan that is written in a way that is clear and concise – that can be read and understood by any member of the general public. He explained that in his personal experiences of writing strategic plans, very technical documents that are included in the main narrative tend to be ineffective. Jeff also made the suggestion that TAC members who have an expertise in a specific area should write that portion of the strategic plan. He asked the TAC members present if this was amenable, and there were no objections.
- c. **Adoption of the Draft Strategic Plan Framework** – *Motioned by Antonio Ortega (Office of Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez), Seconded by Frank Gonzalez (Department of Transportation). Motion passed with no objections or abstentions.*

4. **New River Reaches and Vision Statements.** Jeff Loux (UC Davis) explained the purpose of a vision statement and shared with the TAC two (2) different statements that the UC Davis team had created. From their interviews, the UC Davis team also suggested that it might be beneficial to have one over-arching vision statement, and then individual vision statements for each reach of the New River. The statements were given to the TAC members present for their comments and suggestions.

5. **Progress Reports from Workgroups.**

- a. **Impairments.** Jose Angel (Co-Chair, Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board) gave an update on the progress of the impairments workgroup report. Jose stressed to the TAC the importance of understanding the usage of the New River in Mexico. Jose went over the first section of the draft Impairment workgroup report, and the TAC agreed to defer items: B, C, D, to be discussed at the June 2, 2011 TAC meeting. Frank Gonzalez (Department of Transportation) discussed the hydrology portion of the Impairments workgroup report and asked the TAC members for direction on which size of flow to use for his modeling. Ema Rosa Silva (Vecinos de Calexico) reminded the TAC that a primary concern of the west-side Calexico residents is not only the smell but also the potentiality of flooding and also reiterated that the residents want the river encased.

- b. **Remediation.** Steve Charlton (Imperial Irrigation District). The workgroup received very good feedback from the TAC members on the “Pros & Cons” section of their workgroup report and are making steady progress towards a draft that can be submitted to the TAC for comments and suggestions. A discussion took place between TAC members over the terminology used in the draft section that was presented to the TAC. Jeff Loux (UC Davis) suggested that the workgroup use “lay-men” terminology, so that anyone who read the report could understand it. Steve agreed and stated the workgroup would go back to make sure this issue was addressed.
 - c. **Background and Funding.** Ricardo Martinez (Chair, California Environmental Protection Agency), reported that they had no update.
 - d. **Visioning.** Miguel Figueroa (Calexico New River Committee). The visioning workgroup’s report was being edited by workgroup members and he hoped to have a draft to circulate to the TAC by the next meeting.
6. **Imperial Valley IVMP.** Antonio Ortega (Office of Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez) informed the TAC that he has been attending these meetings and thought a TAC member should be nominated to be a part of this group. He also noted that the IVMP steering committee has begun accepting project proposals.
- a. **Nomination of Miguel Figueroa (Calexico New River Committee) to represent the TAC on the Imperial Valley IVMP.** *Motioned by Steve Charlton (Imperial Irrigation District), Seconded by Frank Gonzalez (Department of Transportation). Motion passed with no objections or abstentions.*
7. **Next Steps**
- a. Chair Ricardo Martinez informed the TAC that he would prepare a nomination letter on behalf of the TAC to be sent to the Imperial Valley IVMP.
 - b. TAC members should continue to communicate with the UC Davis team, specifically Krista.
 - c. Next meeting June 2, 2011, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.
8. **Adjournment**
- a. Meeting adjourned at 5:12 PM (PST).